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**“ ICH DIEN ”**





*Sermons*

# “ ICH DIEN ”

Elementary Studies in  
The Life of Service

A Book for LENT

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34 Maiden Lane, Strand, W.C.

1915

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TO  
MY WIFE

I DEDICATE THESE EARLIEST SHEAVES  
OF MY LITERARY HARVEST



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## PREFATORY NOTE

The Chapters which form this little book were originally the substance of a Course of Lent Sermons. This will account for any colloquialisms in style, as I have thought it best to send it to the press without any alteration in form. The indulgence of the reader is requested for this, and other imperfections. I send it forth in the earnest hope that it may be of some use and stimulate others as well as the writer to a more "reasonable service."

M.P.M.

Eakring,  
Advent, 1914.





“ICH DIEN”



## I. The Inspiration of Service

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.”—ZECHARIAH iv., 6.

“Son, go work to-day in My vineyard!” This call has come down the ages to us men and women of the twentieth century. It is my special mission to bring home to each individual heart and conscience the truth that God wants us to bear witness for Him. The Christian Life is a life of Service. It is of this life of consecrated service that I desire to speak to you. Have you given your heart to God? Then, washed in the precious blood of Christ, yours must be the ministry of intercession and the ministry of work. As to the intercession, practise it for all, and at all times; in the offering of the Blessed Sacrament: in your public prayers: in your private devotions. As to the active work, let it not be hastily undertaken, or without due preparation; let it not be unauthorized work. Take it from God, through your spiritual adviser, to be hallowed by the Divine blessing—do it in His strength: bring it back to Him for His approval. As “ICH DIEN,” *I serve*, is the

motto of him who occupies a position nearest to the throne, so the same must be the life motto of those who would stand nearest to the Heavenly Throne: for we must imitate—*follow* Him Who has sanctified service for all time; Who said, " I am among you as He that serveth," for " Even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

And so, starting to-day from primary principles, I have decided to speak to you first of all on " The *Inspiration* of Service." And is not the fundamental principle stated in the words of our text, " Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts."

Let me remind you of the context in which these words occur. They were the message of GOD to Zerubbabel when he was entering on the great work of rebuilding the Temple. They imply that he would meet with many difficulties and be confronted by much opposition in carrying out that work to its completion; and also that those difficulties would be surmounted and overcome. But the means by which this would be eventually accomplished would not be the weapons of worldly conflict; not the shield, the sword, and the battle;

not the confused noise and garments rolled in blood, of the earthly war ; not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts. And this because the work was spiritual in its nature, and so must be done by the Spirit of the Living GOD working in and by earthly means.

The same applies to that still greater work of building the spiritual temple, which GOD has committed to His people. His Kingdom must be enlarged and His Gospel spread all over the world till the kingdoms of this world shall have become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. But it is not in man's unaided efforts, strengthened and stimulated though they may be by self-sacrifice and abundant labour, that success is to be achieved. We have to remember that though the charge is laid upon us, yet we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of GOD, and not of us ; that Paul may plant, and Apollos water, with fervency and zeal, but it is GOD, and GOD alone, Who giveth the increase. We may spend, and be spent ; but if our motives are selfish, even though the cause be noble, failure is writ large upon our enterprise from the first. The humblest Christian, who lives in the shade,

unknown to fame, but who from his heart daily offers the prayer, “Hallowed be Thy Name ; Thy Kingdom come,” and who tries by his life to commend his religion to others and glorify GOD, does more to extend His Kingdom on earth than the most illustrious herald who is only animated by thoughts of worldly praise, and the glory of self. We must ignore the instrument and throw ourselves into the work, with single heart and sincere aim for the glory of GOD. And is it not an encouragement for us to know that if we work in this spirit, GOD is with us, and our labour is not in vain in the Lord ? Verily, as regards missionary effort, whether at home or abroad, we are not working for ourselves ; we are fellow-labourers with GOD Himself, Who deigns to make use of us and work through us. He taught His Church this lesson in olden days by the prophet Hosea, “I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their GOD, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle.” God has committed to His Church the ministry of reconciliation ; but here again we need the reminder that our motives must be pure if we want Him to acknowledge our work ; for it is “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”



And as it was with regard to the building of the Second Temple, and as it is with regard to the building of the Spiritual Temple, so it is with regard to the shaping of the stones of which that Temple is built. GOD'S Church is made up of units, and if the spiritual life of the Church is to be strong and healthy, it is the duty of each individual member of the Church to live the life of holiness to the Lord.

Here the matter comes home to ourselves. If we have any knowledge of self, we must know by painful experience how often and how miserably our own lives fail, and fall far short of the ideal before us ; how difficult it is for us " to resist the evil, and the good to do." Often even when we are trying to serve GOD, and are conscious of the constant temptation to some one sin which comes in between GOD and us, we bend every energy to cast out that sin ; to shut our eyes and ears to that temptation ; to conquer it ; to stamp it out. But we fail, even though we tried in GOD'S Strength, and so we get despondent and discouraged. But may it not be that we set about it, after all, in the wrong way ? The discipline was too severe. As one has written, " It has sometimes happened that an earnest effort to gain control over a mind long unused to discipline,

suddenly exercised, and without due caution and discretion, not only defeats its own purpose, but brings on a mental paralysis, or so overstrains the machinery as to endanger mental balance. The desired result (to fight out some one particular sin) will never be gained by strained endeavours to drive away certain thoughts that have become habitual. It has been the experience of most of those who have tried this method that the thoughts definitely refuse to go ; nay, that such violent efforts to banish them only give them a firmer hold.”

And what is the reason of this ? Strange, and even paradoxical as it may seem, our efforts in this direction, notwithstanding their bitter intensity, were, after all, negative rather than positive. For you get rid of evil, not so much by fighting against it, as by introducing good. Thus the good will expel the evil ; both can't co-exist, and the principle of good is stronger than that of evil. You remember the lesson of our Blessed Lord's parable about the man who was possessed by a spirit of uncleanness ; he actually did cast it out. And with what result ? His house was empty, swept and garnished ; and seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, entered and took up their abode there, to his

utter destruction ! To go on in the words of the writer I have already quoted : “ The emptying of the mind of evil is not the first step towards filling it with good. It is not a step in that direction at all ; you cannot empty it, and then begin to fill it with better thoughts. No ! You must empty it of evil, *BY* filling it with good. You drive out darkness by filling the room with light. As the good enters it expels the evil.” Did not S. Paul teach the selfsame truth when he wrote with regard to conquering evil thoughts and desires, “ Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.” This seems to furnish an answer to the problem of Isaiah : “ How shall we do good who are accustomed to do evil ? Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? ”

Man was placed in the world to *be* good and to *do* good. The revolution from evil to good—the transformation of life—is effected by invisible means ; not from without, but from within. “ Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.” Men sometimes walk in darkness without being even aware of the fact till aroused to it by the call of God, “ Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee

light.” So the soul is newborn, is translated from bondage to a gradually growing freedom.

The spiritual life will generally have one of two definite starting-points. It will be either the thought of GOD or the thought of self, according to circumstances, environment, or individual character. But in each case the end is the same. Does the thought of GOD take possession of a man? Then he sees a Being of infinite holiness, power and love, and from this he learns the greatness of man's immortal destiny; man who is created in the image and likeness of GOD. And by contrast, as he looks upon himself, he sees majesty dwarfed to meanness by low ideals and pursuits. And so, from the revulsion of feeling caused by this painful contrast, the cry ascends from the darkness, up to GOD: “GOD be merciful to me, a sinner!” “O give me the comfort of Thy help again, and stablish me with Thy free Spirit.”

Or it may be that the soul is awakened to a sense of its destiny by the contemplation not of GOD in the first instance, but by the thought of self. In this case we have the reality of our own needs borne in on us with irresistible force; a consideration which drives us to Him in Whom we have been taught that we shall find

the supply of all our needs, and from the inexhaustible treasury of Whose boundless fulness we shall receive grace for grace. Thus again, GOD becomes the centre from which mercy and help radiate around. His greatness, flowing around our incompleteness, satisfies the hungry soul, and fills it with His goodness. Thus the spiritual life is born, quickened, within us ; GOD is the centre of His Universe ; and we, with all our hitherto unfulfilled hopes and longings full of immortality, after trying one by one all the unsatisfying fruits of earth and finding them but empty husks, discover that we are complete in Him, because we have now at last attained the end of our being, and turn from the putrid springs of earth and the deception of pure intellectual achievement to Him Who has made us for Himself ; well assured that we can find no rest for our souls till we seek it from Him, in Whom alone is the fulness of all that can give satisfaction to our immortal being. So we cease at last spending our money for that which is not bread and our labour for that which satisfieth not ; and abandon our quest after the fountains of earth, whose waters flow muddy and impure, and over each and all of which we find written, " He that drinketh of this water shall thirst

again.” We come to Him, and abide in Him, Whose witness is : “ He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst ; for the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

And what was the inner force which impelled the soul towards the Fountain of Living Water ? Not that of barren intellect, not the will of the strong man forcing from Heaven its treasure. No, it was the striving of the Spirit of the Eternal GOD, working in the Spirit of man, the seeker after truth and holiness. It was “ NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS.”



## II. Obstacles to Service

“The time cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service.”—S. JOHN xvi., 2.

To be ; to do ; and to suffer. This is the sum of life, according to the cynic. The Christian conception of life is higher ; it is more than to *be*—a mere existence ; it certainly is to *do* ; for life is service, and if the service sometimes involves to *suffer*, remember that the Crown of Thorns, and the Bloody Sweat is the “Via Crucis” which all must tread sooner or later. All life is service. For example, the selfish serve self ; the votary of pleasure—to whom every hour unamused is purgatory—serves pleasure. And the life that God demands of His people is a life of service too—and that the highest—even the service of God.

The Service of GOD ! What a noble ideal of life ! To learn here, in the three score years and ten of the earthly pilgrimage, lessons which will make us ready for the eternal life of ministry, where “His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face.” The Service of GOD ! What a hallowed occupation !

And how it exalts, transforms, and ennobles life. Takes away the petty littlenesses, and makes it a thing sweet and holy to live for others. It is not something apart from life ; it is the mainspring which sets the wheels working. It is not even some new occupation introduced into life ; to think so is to make the old, false distinction between things secular and religious ; to do so is to forget that our ordinary duties in this workaday world are the work that GOD has given us to do, and in doing them well we serve GOD.

Sometimes we grow weary and dispirited with the fag and monotony of our work ; its dreary, everyday grind ; its thanklessness ; its toilsomeness. Ah ! but then think—it is the service of GOD in which I am engaged ; I must do it as unto GOD, and with earnest prayer for His blessing on my daily round and common task ; and for His strength that I may do it well, and to His glory.

In this spirit, a halo of heavenliness encircles our path ; it becomes brightened with a lustre which is of celestial birth. How often do we long for the encouraging word which comes not to cheer us on our way ! It comes not from our fellow-men, it may be ; yet if it is the service of GOD, does not the thought of

His approval help us and stimulate us with fresh courage? But, then, I can do so little for GOD! That thought is only to blame GOD for not increasing our opportunities, and enlarging our sphere of usefulness. There is often more heroism displayed in doing our ordinary duties well—duties which the world takes little or no interest in—than in doing the great deed which wins the applause of men. The way of GOD's service is the path of self-denial; to sacrifice self for His sake and that of others. Is there no heroism in that? And to those who are on the alert for opportunities, there are many such. Opportunities to be kind to others; to give up our time to visit the poor and the afflicted. This is angel's work, and S. James tells us it is "pure religion and undefiled"; it will gain the great "Inasmuch" of Heaven's Eternal Love. To dry the eyes of the little child who is sobbing his heart out on the footpath over some childish grief; to speak the word of cheery encouragement to the downhearted; to care for those for whom nobody cares; little offices like these, done not for the glory of self, but done in the shade when nobody is looking on, are enrolled in GOD's Book of Remembrance, and will in no wise lose their reward!

Hallowing Sunday ; working for God,  
Letting the light shine o'er life's dark road,  
Bearing the Cross, and doing His Will—  
Witnessing for Him through good and ill—  
Just to please Jesus !

S. Martin of Tours, on a bleak winter's day, cut his cloak in half and shared it with a beggar, only to find that he had clad the Lord Jesus. Can we not, in imitation of his spirit, spend less on personal needs and luxuries ; thus we shall have more to spare in the work of alleviating the awful distress which always surrounds us. How can we, the servants of GOD, spend so much on self, and on what ministers to our own comfort and the pride of life—leading lives of frivolity and worldly pleasure ; our sole care to get out of the world the most it can give. Passing from one form of amusement to another ; living in pleasure, which is death in life, according to the teaching of S. Paul—oblivious to the fact that GOD has given us the priceless opportunity of laying up for ourselves treasure above, and the place reserved in the everlasting habitations for those who instead of spending so much on self, make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. Count the cost ! Dont begin well and then tire of it, and lapse back by degrees into the old ways. “ No man

having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." If God sends difficulties in the way of service, we must not give in on the ground that at least we have tried, and have done something. Difficulties in the way of God's service must be surmounted and overcome, not given in to, if we would be "fit for the Kingdom." "Ye *did* run well; who did hinder you?"

The choice is between continuing in God's service and getting His reward in His time, or else getting discouraged and faint-hearted; giving it up because it demands a greater sacrifice than we think we are justified in making; and thus losing our reward, and letting another take our Crown, that Crown which would have been ours if we had only endured unto the end, instead of giving up the struggle.

One thing is evident—if we are not serving God it is because we are serving either the devil, the world, or self. That anti-trinity of evil, which we are pledged to renounce.

We cannot compensate by much activity in other directions for neglect of the particular work to which God has put us; we must not leave it, and embark on some other enterprise less trying to flesh and blood; we

must not think that we can compound with GOD for neglecting the immediate work which He has given us by much energy in some other kind of work which costs us less, and is more congenial to our tastes, and which we have decided to our own satisfaction is equally work for GOD.

GOD once told King Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites, but Saul spared the best of the spoil for the purpose of sacrificing to GOD ; he was not allowed to offer his unhallowed sacrifice ; he received the lesson, which is one for all time, that GOD chooses the way in which men are to serve Him. " Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice." Saul really and honestly wanted to serve GOD, but he wanted to do so in his own way, just like ourselves, and he was plainly told, " Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He also hath rejected thee." " Stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry " in GOD's sight ; that stubbornness by which we are always ready to justify ourselves in our own self-appointed course of action, and refuse to obey GOD's voice, or listen to His warnings.

We are serving SELF when we choose the way in which we shall serve GOD : we are serving THE WORLD when we are led away from



the work He wants us to do, by the remonstrances of others, and when we listen to the siren voice of worldly pleasure, or that of public opinion, and think of what the world will say : and we are serving THE DEVIL when we shut our eyes and harden our hearts and stifle the voice of conscience ; and simply give in to do as others do, and follow with the crowd. But we are serving GOD when we dare to take a firm stand, and say “ No ” to the good opinion of others, and the allurements of the senses. At the time it seems as if we must finish our journey alone. But not so ! We are on GOD’S side, and one *with* GOD is always a majority. We must always obey the voice of conscience, but it must be an enlightened and educated conscience. It will not be enough simply to do what we think to be right, and flatter ourselves that we are then obeying conscience. Our Lord tells us that this can happen, and forewarns His disciples that a time would come when men would think that they were following conscience, and even serving GOD by killing them.

My friend ! It is not an easy thing, this service of GOD of which I speak to you this Lent. No, far from it. Directly we try, we are met by obstacles at every turn :

" The world, the flesh, and Satan dwell  
Around the path I tread."

Yet we must do the right ! Oh, try in God's strength to do it. Remember that though the hosts of hell were ranged in serried ranks against you, yet those who are with you to protect and strengthen you, are more and mightier than those who are against you ; and you are pledged with the very first drops of your Baptismal dew to fight, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant, unto life's end ! And remember, when you were confirmed you renewed that solemn vow, promise, and profession, when you said those words, " I Do ! " at the most solemn moment of your life ; and received the grace of God's Holy Spirit to strengthen you. To strengthen you—and for what purpose ? Simply that you might serve God aright. Religion is very thorough. It is a hard thing to live the Christian life, but God gives strength. Dont let us for evermore be harping on that dismal thought of our own weakness. It may put you on the right way, and awaken conscience, but it will never save your soul. Think instead of God's strength, communicated to you in sacrament and prayer ; think of your duty—to serve God, and keep on asking for His strength ; ay, and keep on using that strength as it comes. You must

not think of self and human infirmities—think instead of GOD and His strength. It is of His only gift that it cometh that His faithful people do unto Him true and laudable service. This is your duty, and mine to-day—in spite of all difficulties and in the face of all opposition on the part of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Think ! That is what people find it so hard to do. The Emperor Napoleon's sole thought was glory—the glory of self ; Wellington's was duty, and by it he won Waterloo, and also gained the other thing by the way ; for acting on the inspiration of that grand thought he proved how—

“ Not once nor twice in our rough island story  
The path of duty was the way to glory ! ”

Do the duty, the Service of GOD, which lies at your very door. The old monk had a glorious vision of a radiant angel bending over him, but he had to do GOD service. He had to leave his cell, and dole out food to the hungry poor. Prosaic, wasn't it ? Ah ! but then it was GOD's service. He did the duty, hard though it was ; and was rewarded when he returned to his cell by finding the angel still there, with the glowing commendation—“ Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled.” No one can be doing his duty in the world who is

not in some sense one of the world's workers. Idleness is sin, and the parent of sin and shame. " Six days shalt thou labour " is GOD's command. Life is too short to fritter away in moping and self-indulgence. He who idles and wastes his time on self, sins against the law of his being, and against the law of GOD.

We must not linger on the Mount of Transfiguration ; we have got to climb down from even the fervency of our devotion to the hard world—but is it no compensation to know that here lies the service of GOD for each of us ; the work that He has given us to do for Him ; that we are but exchanging for a time the vision of Heaven for the reality of service. Before the Mount of Ascension comes " the hill that is called Calvary," on which stands a Cross ; even before the hill Calvary is the Mount of Olives, in which is a garden called Gethsemane. There is a Gethsemane and a Calvary in everybody's life who wants to serve GOD ; but there is also a Mount of Transfiguration, and a Mount of Ascension, as compensation. If the Mount of Transfiguration suggests the three Tabernacles ; on the Mount of Calvary stands the three Crosses. Do you know what this means ? In the one instance, companionship in worship ; in the

other, companionship in suffering. And as Jesus is before us on the Mount of Transfiguration, so He is with us on that of Calvary. One of those three crosses is for Him, Who suffers not only *for* us, but *with* us. We sometimes make our own crosses and forge the rivets which nail us to them, and then wonder, or repine, when GOD takes us at our word, and makes us bear even our selfmade cross to some Calvary that He has chosen for us. But if in Gethsemane there is the Cup of Temptation, and sorrow upon sorrow ; if the "sorrow's crown of sorrow" be our portion there, there is also the strengthening angel of GOD—and the prospect that our sorrow will be turned into joy—a joy which no man taketh from us. For our Mount of Ascension can only be reached through the grave, and gate of death.

Does not all this show GOD's love for us ? Does it not also call out our love to Him ? Well, if we love Him, we must serve Him, and love is the root and mainspring of all true service. Let us not grow weary in well-doing. Pray for the grace of perseverance, that you may "endure unto the end."

We must serve Him with body, soul, and will ; they are all His ; we must honour His

Holy Name—His Word, His Day, at all costs ; we must never be ashamed or too timid to confess Him before others, when He lays this duty upon us. If we honour Him by our example, and influence others to do the same, He will keep His promise to us—" Them that honour Me, I will honour." " Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in Heaven." GOD expects us to acknowledge His claims. We must never by our example ; our want of courage, our slackness, bring dishonour on our dear Master ; if we do so in weakness, fear, timidity, the want of moral courage, the fear of man, we are wounding Him in the house of His friends by our treachery ; we crucify the Son of GOD afresh, and put Him to an open shame. GOD is looking on ; He has laid help upon One that is mighty—the voice of prayer ascends to the Throne from the congregation of the faithful—that GOD's child may be strengthened to serve Him. Oh ! what sorrow we all cause our Lord by the way in which we fall before the ridicule of others who dont honour Him. Yet he bears long with us, and in His mercy gives us fresh chances to retrieve the errors of the past.

In religion, as in everything else, we must

beware of the "falsehood of extremes." At this time last century it was the trend of the age to magnify the justice of GOD at the expense of His love ; nowadays we magnify His love, but too often it is at the expense of His justice. We have got into the way of living as if sin and its necessary punishment were not a reality. We forget that " a GOD all-mercy is a GOD unjust " ; that He can by no means clear the guilty who die unrepentant ; that He has declared in words of solemn import " The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The death of a soul ! I suppose that is what the poet meant by " the death that cannot die." Eternal exclusion from GOD's presence. GOD forbid that I should say one word to disparage or depreciate GOD's mighty love ; yet even love such as His must have a limit. We want nowadays to have the danger and awful consequence of sin enforced on us. If we cherish sin in our hearts, we cannot serve GOD truly. Christ has died to save us from our sins, but we must repent and cease from sin if we want to be saved. We mustn't be sorry for it, and then go and do it again, only to be sorry again till *next* time ; for " Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." GOD means it. He has declared His will. He has made known the



way of pardon and life ; He gives us all our chance, and He wont go back from His word. Oh ! strive and pray against sin, and intercede for others.

Is it not a sign of the times that people object to the Athanasian Creed, which enforces fearlessly Gospel teaching on the subject of sin ; they water it down ; they dont like to think of hell, and everlasting punishment, or the impossibility of salvation to the wilfully unrepentant. They see men live godless and sinful lives ; they are horrified at the wickedness of the evil doer ; then when he dies, they act as though the bare fact of death had suddenly erased the past, and numbered him with the saints in glory everlasting ! So they inscribe pious sentiments on his tombstone. Dont live careless lives ; dont water down the teaching of the Bible and Holy Church, dont leave GOD out of your life now, lest He leave you out of Eternal Life hereafter. " The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and all the people that forget God.*"

Let us guard jealously from all abuse that great gift with which GOD has endued us, the mysterious power of influence. Let us always follow the guidance of GOD, and pray that He may direct our conscience lest we err from Him.



Let us not be too stubborn to be convinced when we may be in the wrong. And when others sneer at us because we take the unpopular course, and bring to bear on us the opposing forces of ridicule, sarcasm, the voice of public opinion (called by Canon Liddon "the intellectual arm of the world"), let us stand firm for our GOD. When we are assailed in our weakness and helplessness by some such taunt as, "*Always* fast and vigil ; *always* watch and prayer," let us be brave in GOD's strength to do what we know we should do, and GOD will defend the right ! He will protect His Own !

" Christian, answer boldly  
While I breathe ,I pray !  
Peace shall follow battle,  
Night shall end in day ! "

### III. Strength for Service

“ When I called upon Thee, Thou heardest me, and enduedst my soul with much strength.”—PSALM cxxxviii., 4

People generally start in life with some great aim or end in view, and in proportion as their ideals are high and noble, or the reverse, so that object will be something exalted, or else something more easily attained. With one this aim will be simply worldly success and earthly fame—the desire to excel in one's profession, to gain the approval and good opinion of others. All this is well so far as it goes, but if character is to be properly developed and talents used to the full, our ambition must be higher than earth. As the poet sings—“ A man's reach should exceed his grasp—Or what's Heaven for? ” It must be something to call out effort and self-denial ; even something elusive, and demanding the full exercise of all our energies, and the earnest putting out of all our powers.

Over and above any minor object, there is a great purpose in life ; that life which we all have to live, as considered in the abstract ; a purpose which applies equally to peer and

peasant, to scholar and day labourer alike. And that purpose has a longer and wider stretch than life itself. For, after all, these efforts which engross the individual are bounded by the horizon of earth, and are particular to himself. While the goal set before mankind is open to the whole race of men, and on its attainment depends the everlasting destinies of the race.

The true object of life is the attainment by each member of the human family of personal holiness or likeness to Christ ; conformity to the example which He set. But who "is sufficient for these things?" Certainly not we, who are hampered at every turn by the opposing forces of circumstances ; the prey of environment and heredity, and a thousand intruding elements of every description. Hindered all around by our natural instincts, and the evil propensities of our fallen nature ; thwarted by the force of our passions ; dragged down by earthly pursuits and earthly pleasures not always void of sin ; which seem to exclude all efforts after godliness. Each of us can set his seal to the melancholy admission of the Apostle when he writes of a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and confesses, " The good that I would, I do not, and

the evil that I would not, that I do. O wretched man that I am—who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ”

It is the recurrence of the old problem of the ages ; the frailty of man. And over and above all the hindrances that beset us, how we all set aside the true purpose of life by our pitiful yielding to the voice of the tempter ; by our lapses into sin, our falling before the seductive temptation ! Oh ! how we have to be on our guard against the first entrance of evil thoughts and desires. The Satan who tempts us is no unsightly monster, but generally an angel of beauty, for he transforms himself into an angel of light ; and if he were to appear before us in all the hideousness of his dread deformity, we should flee aghast from him. So he works warily, and clothes himself in such disguise as to make sin attractive to us, and often unrecognisable as sin—till we have fallen into his trap. Thus he gains an entrance and power over us, and encourages us in indulgence of the lower nature which we share in common with the brutes. He prevents us from cultivating the other nature with which our complex being is endowed ; the higher instincts which we share with the angels, nay, even with Him Whom we should

serve, Who is still "Son of Man," and has exalted and ennobled our humanity, which He now wears at GOD's right hand.

Man, thrown on his own unaided resources, must, without doubt, perish everlastingly. But GOD holds him out a helping hand, to lift him from the mire of earth, and set him in heavenly places. He brings eternal strength within his reach, whereby he may realize the ideal of personal holiness. When man has got to the end of his tether, then he calls to the Lord in his trouble, and the Lord delivers him out of his distress. "When I called upon thee, thou heardest me and enduedst my soul with much strength." According to the meaning of the original, the answer came at once. But does GOD always answer prayer at once? Does not our experience seem to show that the answer to prayer is delayed till the soul grows sick with asking for what never comes, and the spirit of doubt takes full possession. The doubt as to whether we have not approached a GOD Who either does not hear or else refuses to grant our petition. We must be on our guard lest we charge GOD foolishly. We must never let doubt gain ground, else we shall lose the small portion of happiness which seems to be left to us; and our lives bereft of

trust, soon become bereft of hope too. Let us face the question fairly and squarely. We appealed to GOD for help in our trouble ; we got no relief ; and our half-indulged resolve—" Perhaps it will come if I persevere. GOD is only trying my faith ; I will pray on yet a little while," is met by the reminder that the statement of the Bible is that *when* the Psalmist called, GOD heard *even then*, and thus we are thrown back upon ourselves once more. True, but what does the Psalmist say was the answer to his prayer which came immediately ? " Thou heardest me, and enduedst my soul with much strength." This puts the whole matter on an entirely different footing. GOD does not necessarily answer the prayer by making things right, and removing the cross ; if He did, we should lose the joy of suffering with Christ. He did not do so in our Lord's case in the garden of Gethsemane, nor in S. Paul's case ; but in all three cases the prayer was answered at once. In the Psalmist's case his soul was endued with " much strength ;" in that of our Blessed Lord there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him ; and in that of S. Paul, " My grace is sufficient for thee ; My strength is made perfect in weakness." So when we pray to

GOD in all humility and faith that He would come to our aid, and take away the grief that weighs us down we may be certain that the answer is swift and sure ; either the load of pain is lifted from our shoulders, or the angel of strength is sent to our aid.

So it is evident that we must not allow ourselves to persist in the fruitless petition that the sorrow—a patient bearing of which forms character—may be removed. GOD has already answered our prayer “ as is most expedient ” for us. He has endued our soul with much strength. Let us take up the old burden with fresh courage and we shall find that our cross has raised us nearer GOD ; we are now able to bear it better, and GOD is glorified before men by our patience under adversity. We may believe that when it has done its work thoroughly it will be removed, for our wills will then be brought into conformity with GOD’S, and we, in utter submissiveness to Him, shall know no will but His.

Why then, indulge in fruitless grief, and vain repining because GOD won’t give us our own way, and make us happy according to our own ideas ? To do so simply makes us discontented, and forms within us the habit of increasing sorrow by brooding over it when



we can't mend it or end it as we ourselves see fit. Would it not be better at the very outset to form within ourselves the active habit of simple and implicit submission to God's will, which must in the end prevail, and which we are keeping back, and actively thwarting, by working against it ; trying to bend it to our own will, and so indefinitely prolonging a hopeless and unequal struggle, and growing day by day more unhappy. Sorrow comes to all, and when we spend our days in hopeless dreaming of what might have been, instead of bracing ourselves bravely to meet and face and eventually conquer what is ; such grief takes entire possession of us, and makes us unfit for the service of God.

“ Thou heardest me, and enduedst my soul with much strength.” But then, this strength must be used, and not suffered to spend itself or lie dormant. If we neglect it and brood over our unhappiness, this becomes sin to us, God is working His purpose out, but we are resisting Him, and so falling into a fresh sin. One who has allowed himself to drift into this state through lack of honest effort is much to be pitied ; his ailment is very real and it is not to be cured by pious platitudes, and well-meant advice to be good and brave, in the spirit



of Job's three friends. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," and often the nearest and dearest friend dare not intrude on a sorrow which he does not understand and cannot deal with.

But sorrow such as I have depicted, if allowed to gain the upper hand, sours life; its component parts are gloom, sloth and irritation.

Readers of Dante may remember that when he descends to the Fifth Circle of the *Inferno* he finds a loathsome marsh, in which struggle the souls of those whom anger has ruined. But amidst the horrors of that putrid fen there are other souls sunk down lower still; these he cannot see, but their presence is indicated by bubbles which arise to the surface. His guide tells him that these bubbles are caused by the sobs of those who are plunged further down into the dismal swamp. These are the souls of the discontented—those who while on earth gave way to unbroken sullenness which shut out light and love; and in the *Inferno*, they can only reiterate their sad confession: "Gloomy were we in the sweet air that is gladdened by the sun, carrying sullen, lazy smoke within our hearts; now lie we gloomy here in the white mire." The components of *gloom* and *irritation* are specially dwelt on by Dante when he describes this scene, but in

the Eighteenth Canto of the *Purgatorio* he brings their *sloth* to the front, when describing the expiation of those who can be cleansed from it.\*

With those who give way to this sin of discontented brooding over troubles there can be no discipline, no groping after God in the dark, nothing that He can use to strengthen and develop character. Self-absorbed, we find in them no sympathy, no fellow-feeling with others in joy and pain. Those who give way to such a disposition fail to realize that they are yielding to temptation ; that if they brace themselves to conquer it, in reliance on God, and using the " much strength " with which He endues the soul in answer to prayer, they will find that when the pain of mind or body has done its work it will be removed, for it is only of a temporary nature. " Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Seek God ; wait on Him " Who turneth the shadow of death into the morning." Then you will be like those described in another Psalm " who, going through the vale of misery, use it for a well . . . . they will go from strength to strength."

\*See Chapter on "*Accidie*" in Paget's "*Spirit of Discipline*," to which I owe the thoughts here set down.

Let me, in conclusion, give three practical rules as an aid towards getting rid of this particular sin. We may as well admit that it has its root in sheer selfishness. This has no place in the self-denying religion taught by the Master. And so, when we feel ourselves yielding to it, let us make an effort to resist in GOD'S strength. In order to do so successfully, let us set ourselves steadily to do these three things to the best of our ability.

FIRST, let us think of the patient sufferings of others, who can bear up courageously under sorrows which we can never feel, nor are called on to endure ; those " meek souls " of the poet, who

" Never deem  
Their daily life an angel's theme  
Nor think the cross they bear so calm  
Shall prove in Heaven a martyr's palm."

Do they not teach us the lesson how sublime a thing it is " to suffer and be strong ? "

SECONDLY, let us turn at once to some kind of work, whether spiritual, secular, or merely domestic. So when earthly hopes are disappointed, and earthly blessings withdrawn, and life seems barren and desolate and all earthly interests are " dreary, stale, flat, and unprofitable "—let us use some of our " much strength " in work ; useful labour—whether

of heart, hand or brain. Let us try and bear comfort to some other mourner—or, as Keble says: " When you find yourself overpowered with melancholy the best way is to go out and do something kind to somebody or other."

THIRDLY, think of the sufferings of Christ, Who is always ready to succour the tempted :—

" When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, O abide with me ! "

So let us bear, with all patience and resignation what GOD sends, and He will endue our soul with " much strength " to serve Him. Let us fight our battle bravely, persistently, and unflinchingly, and " he that shall endure unto the end shall be saved." Pray for this spirit of endurance, and think for your comfort of the Lord's own promise, " Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Thus doing, and living out of self, for GOD and for others, we shall find from our own experience that the Psalmist's reward will be ours too. " When I called upon Thee, Thou heardest me, and enduedst my soul with much strength." Thus the frailty of man—the thought with which we started—becomes conquered and lost in the strength of GOD Most High.

## IV. The Majesty of Service

"He that is greatest among you shall be your servant."  
—S. MATTHEW xxiii., 11.

In these Addresses which I have been giving you during this Lent on "The Life of Service" some of you will doubtless have observed that I have spoken chiefly of service *to God*. But we must not lose sight of the fact so beautifully brought out in the poem—"The Vision of Abou Ben Adhem," that true love of man—and service of man—is also service of GOD in its highest form, a lesson which is also taught in Longfellow's "*Legend Beautiful*." So in speaking to you to-day on the "Majesty of Service," I shall have some remarks to offer on the dignity of service to *man*.

In these days in which our lot is cast, days of keen competition, when life is a strenuous struggle, and the spirit of selfish ambition moves men to over-reach one another in the race for place, power, position, wealth; any such doctrine as that brought into prominence to-day by our text seems to strike a jarring note, and to be strangely out of place. Still,

as in Gospel-days, James and John are to the front with their prayer for supremacy ; still, as in Gospel-days, we are reminded that " lowliness is young ambition's ladder " ; that the way to honour lies in the bitter cup of suffering and the fiery baptism of pain. And so, in one of her Collects, the Church directs our thoughts to that " time and laudable service," the capacity for which is the gift of GOD, as the way that leads to the final attainment of His heavenly treasure. The idea of greatness which men cherish is very different from GOD's idea. The horizon of earthliness is bounded by earth, and so the worldly-minded are ambitious to rise to a high worldly position, but the follower of the meek and lowly Saviour of the world smiles at dreams of earthly greatness, does the right, and leaves the future in his Father's hands.

He is even willing, when GOD's voice calls him, to descend to the lowest room ; to be despised by the world ; but the reason is that he weighs this world in the balance against the next, and finds it wanting ; he sees the worldly-minded attain the very pinnacle of their ambition, and looks on further than they ever do, and finds it written in GOD's Word : " The things that are seen are

temporal, but the things not seen are eternal." He proves the truth of what I have already said—that the path to true greatness—a greatness which will outlast the pomp and circumstance of earth, and flourish when it decays—is the path of humility, the following of the example of One, Who, though Lord of all, emptied Himself of His Divine glory, and became Servant of all ; One, Who from the lowly manger-cradle of Bethlehem, from the Cross of Shame of Calvary, and the borrowed grave of Arimathea, rose to the Crown of glory, and the place at GOD's right hand. It is always the same ; he that exalteth himself in pride and self-sufficiency shall be abased, while he that humbleth himself shall be exalted far above all dreams of earthly dignity to a high place in the Father's love and a mansion of glory in the Father's house !

Yes ! men's ideas differ according as their ideals are high or low, earthly or spiritual. The dignity of honest labour, the glory of self-renunciation, and losing all to find Christ—these, and all such like ideals are deemed impossible by the world, and also undesirable, because they are too high for the world's practice. But they are the very object that the Christian tries to realise ; for he knows that



in striving to attain them he is following the example of his Divine Master, Who said, " I am among you as He that serveth." Christian ideals may seem despicable, yet hereafter they will be *all* that is worth striving for. Worldly prospects must not attract the child of God by their glamour and glitter, else he will find himself reduced to the ranks of the lowest.

We hear a great deal nowadays about the perfect equality of men ; yet the Bible, which teaches us that all men are brothers, because GOD is Father of all, also tells us of many different orders and ranks in the hierarchy of Heaven. There are angels and archangels ; cherubim and seraphim ; there is no impossible equality of rank and office ; there is the authority of those who sit in Moses' seat, and are the interpreters of his law ; there are the varying degrees of power, each dependent on the labour and faithfulness of those who rule over ten cities and those who rule over five ; there is the honour and exalted position, according to the rules of Heaven's heraldry, of those who sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Also, there is the voluntary humility of those who take the lowest room and minister here to the wants of sorrowing and suffering humanity—the Francis de



Assisis, the Florence Nightingales of the world—those who give time, money, sympathy, love—to people whom “the strong sons of the world despise.” And those who show the highest nobility and finally attain the highest place in the Kingdom of Heaven are they who voluntarily drink the cup of reproach, sorrow, and pain which the Master drank; those who are great enough to take up the Cross, deny self, and follow Christ; great enough to serve others in all lowliness and humility for His sake; great enough to be less than a brother, and yet higher than the crowned monarch who sways the destinies of empire from his throne; because they can stoop to what others call the *drudgery* of service; but what in Heaven’s court is considered the *majesty* of service! He who is servant of servants here, for the sake of Christ, will hereafter reign with Him in endless glory in that day when “he that humbleth himself shall be exalted,” according to the teaching of the holy Gospel.

Christ denounces the arrogant assumption of mere title, divorced from the reality which that title represents. “Be not ye called Rabbi,” but rather try to show others what a true rabbi does for GOD and man; be not only called “Father,” but let your fatherhood be

a reflection of God's ; be not only called “ Master,” but realize in daily life, the Christian ideal of what a master should be—so shall ye be disciples of the Most High. Can we, each for himself, accept the teaching of the Gospel, that the greatest of us is not necessarily he who has been blessed with influence, position, wealth, education, birth, talent ; but that he is greatest who can consecrate these gifts of Heaven to the Lord Who gave them and the good of his fellowmen : who uses his influence for the relief of the oppressed, for the spread of the Gospel of love and goodwill to others, that they may be partakers of its joy ; who uses his position for the spread of his Christian influence to those whom he attracts ; his wealth for the loosing of the captives from the bondage in which they are enthralled by those who are taken captive by the Devil at his will ; that those who sit in darkness may have the light taken to them ; his education he consecrates with his talents for the furtherance of the like object, and thus does his part in winning the world for his Lord.

In a word, he is greatest who has learnt to humble himself ; who is great enough to serve ; to become the brother of those who are neglected ; the helper of the friendless ; the

succourer of the needy ; great enough to love not only those who love him, but also those who most need his love ; great enough to welcome those whom the world rejects, and to prove his Christianity by the Christliness of his daily life after the example of Him Who was amongst men " as He that serveth."

How the judgment of Christianity reverses the judgments of the world ! The world scorns the poor repentant sinner, trying in bitter contrition to find his way back to the paths of honour, rectitude, and virtue ; such a one is heavily handicapped in the race of life ; the world shuts up its bowels of compassion from him, and wont believe in the genuineness of his repentance, and so drives him away to fall a victim to the scourge of hopeless despair and lovelessness ; and judged by worldly standards, and according to a worldly criterion.

" The world will not believe a man repents,  
And this wise world of ours is mainly right,"

but he whom the world rejects and scorns is still loved by Him Who died to save. That love of all which the Gospel enjoins, must manifest its presence in the lives of Christ's disciples. His mark still " outwears the rankest blot," and those who are too evil and

full of sin to be received by a world which hates a man whose sin is *found out*, while all the time it cherishes and smiles at the evil-doing of one who can evade the scrutiny of the eye of justice, are yet the objects of God's love—and should be encouraged, and helped to return to that love, which in the past they have scorned. GOD is waiting to receive them. He appeals to His people to bring them hope ; to love them, too, and help them to return to their Father. The grandest blessing of the Gospel, the brightest gem in a starlit crown, is reserved for those who turn the sinner from the error of his way. For they that be wise with a wisdom which men of the world despise, shall yet shine as the brightness of the firmament when the cold intellects and shallow wits of *this* world have spent their power *in* the world without ever making one human soul a whit happier ; and they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars around the Throne of GOD, for ever and ever.

He who was one of the greatest in the Apostolic band, gloried in describing himself as servant of servants ; slave of slaves. Blessed is he who is willing to take the lowest room at God's bidding ; the blessing of the peace which passeth understanding, and of

the love which passeth knowledge, abides with him, and brightens his lot. He can rejoice in God's love, even when the storms of adversity rage around ; he is following in the way his Master trod, and daily fulfilling His own prayer for grace to follow the blessed steps of Christ's most holy life ; and the path leads through peace to light. The Valley of Humiliation is the pathway which ends in the everlasting hills, towards which our pilgrimage tends. It was trodden by the Master, and by His saints in every age—and as we tread it, our experience will be that our Leader is at our side. His rod and staff comfort us ; with His help we shall be blessed.

“ He that is greatest among you shall be your servant,” and thus shall arise from the dignity and majesty of service on earth to the happiness of the unwearying service of those who rest not day and night in the work which is eternal ; whose rest is worship ; whose service is rest.

To love men ; to serve men ; leads upward to the love of God, and to that service which is perfect freedom.

## V. Leading Others to Service

“When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”  
—S. LUKE xxii., 32.

It has been remarked, and it is a matter of common, everyday experience, that exceptionally strong characters often fail in the very points which constitute their strength. This statement may be illustrated by many examples which will readily recur to our thoughts. To take only one, from Old Testament history. What is more evident than the calm unswerving courage of Elijah in the face of danger? Yet at a moment of reaction, and after a striking proof of this, we find him flying for his safety from the fury of Jezebel, and imploring GOD to take his life. Then in the instance of our text, S. Peter was another man of strong character, fearless and self-reliant. And this very self-reliance proved a snare to him and led him to make rash promises which he failed to fulfil, and in a spirit of self-confidence to boast of his own loyalty and fidelity at a time when he was simply the sport of Satan. He could not realize his danger, and so did not believe our Lord's warning in answer

to his arrogant and vainglorious boast, "Lord I am ready to go with Thee both to prison and to death"—"I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me." Here is the warning that applies to the self-confident in every age. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." In times when we feel specially near to the Blessed Lord, when the fervour of devotion is stirred into the flame of steady and even self-sacrificing love, we must not presume on the strength of our feelings, but pray to God for grace to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. "Having done all." What an amount of watchful self-sacrifice and discipline is involved in those words! What an earnest struggle against the power of evil! These Apostles were very close to the Lord, yet the bare fact that this was so did not protect them from the power of temptation. Nor will our frequent Eucharists, and use of the means of grace, in themselves, be at all effectual to safeguard us, unless we watch and fight. It will not require much self-knowledge or experience of life to convince us of this. Has it never happened in your own experience that you enter on the enjoyment of some



innocent pleasure, and all goes well for a time ; you are off your guard, and Satan comes unperceived, and makes even that which should be for your health " an occasion of falling." The abuse of what is good may lead to sin ; the eyes become blinded and the heart hardened through the deceitfulness of sin ; we have fallen a prey to sudden temptation before we are aware of it ; and even when qualms of conscience begin to make themselves felt, we are ready to justify ourselves. Instead of meeting the devil by a firm resistance, we stop to parley with him. We argue that GOD knows our weakness, and is merciful to our sins ; we even go the length of continuing in our prayers, while cherishing some secret sin all the while ; forgetting the warning of Holy Writ. " If I regard sin in my heart, the Lord will not hear," and so we allow our hearts to become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. And of all forms of deceit, self-deceit is fatally easy, and specially dangerous. We must give up what is wrong when we know that it is wrong, and make a fresh start in GOD's strength. You cant draw near to GOD while indulging in a course of wrongdoing, for wrong-doing is sin, and the very essence of sin is separation from GOD.



As soon as we realize our own weakness, which we can often do only after the knowledge has been borne in upon us by frequent falls, we shall be ready to start afresh in GOD's strength. Even the saint of GOD may fall, but when he rises again in the knowledge of good and evil, I think that the words of our text convey much comfort, for as well as a solemn warning, they teach a comforting truth and enforce a practical duty.

Taking the whole passage, of which the actual text is the concluding words, we have first the solemn warning: "Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat." Though this was addressed to S. Peter, the "you" is plural, and includes all the Apostles. And the "desire" of Satan is in reality a demand. Just as in the Book of Job we read of how Satan presented himself before GOD with the demand for Job, so here we are told that he demanded the very Apostles of the Lord, to sift them, so that he may get his chaff.

Temptation is not a mark of special sin. Our Blessed Lord Himself passed through the furnace; so did the Holy Apostles, and so must all who try to follow the Master. But if we fight against it, there is the same re-

straining power, which never suffers us to be tempted beyond our strength, but with the temptation makes a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. You were sorely tempted, and resisted the temptation. Why ? Or it may be that you fell ; you enjoyed the pleasures of sin for a season. Why did you recover yourself ? What prevented you from falling more deeply than you did ? What was the restraining power that saved you from a more shameful fall ? Was it not the sheltering care of the Good Shepherd for those for whom He died ? Was it not the continued intercession of the Great High Priest ? As you look back upon the past, when Satan so nearly had you in his clutches, and you were on the very point of giving up the unequal struggle as hopeless, One passed by with pierced side, One Who loves you with an everlasting love ; Who encouraged you to fight on, and prevented you from losing trust in GOD's power, mercy and love. " I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Think of it, O tempest-tossed soul, and throw yourself on His mercy :—

" In the hour of trial  
Jesu, pray for me—  
Lest by base denial  
I depart from Thee—

When thou seest me waver,  
With a look recall  
Not for fear or favour  
Suffer me to fall ! ”

“ Intercessor, Friend of Sinners,  
Earth’s Redeemer, plead for me  
Where the songs of all the sinless  
Sweep across the crystal sea.”

Then we have in conclusion a practical duty set before us. When we have overcome Satan, we must not rest content in complacent self-satisfaction ; we must beware of lapsing into idleness, leaving the house empty, swept and garnished, only to fall a prey to his next assault. GOD has given us power ; He has sent forth strength for us. That strength, as we have already seen in the course of these addresses, must be worked on and put to some useful purpose. “ When thou art converted,” that is, when you have resisted the devil and made him flee from you, “ strengthen thy brethren.” They are weak ; they are in danger ; they must be rescued and encouraged and comforted. Deal gently with others, not harshly, and win them to the right. GOD has dealt very gently and mercifully with you ; dont repel even the open and notorious sinner ; you dont know how hard he may be trying to recover himself. Let us take him by the hand ;

let us pray for him, and reflect from our own bearing, " the meekness and gentleness of Christ." We must not lose heart ; we must strengthen our brethren ; we must not lose patience. GOD is infinitely patient with us ; we must not treat him with severity, for " the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of GOD" ; we must not sit in judgment on him—there is One that judgeth, who will render unto every man according to his works. Nothing is lost by kindness, gentleness and tact ; and a rich reward is promised to those who bring others to GOD.

There is a mediæval legend which tells how an aged man came one evening to a priest for absolution ; and as he revealed the pitiful tale of one sin after another—seemingly the accumulation of a wasted and ruined life, the priest was so horrified that he stopped him, and sent him away telling him that even GOD could not forgive so great wickedness. The same night the priest had a vision. He saw the sinner whom he had rejected stand before the Bar of GOD. Justice held up her balances, and the accusing angel cast into them one by one the weights of the sins which the man had confessed to the priest ; all seemed hopeless, and sentence was about to be pronounced

when a rustle was heard, and the angel of mercy came and threw into the other balance a handkerchief soaked with tears ; this at once turned the scale, and the penitent sinner was absolved by GOD. When the priest awoke, he hastened out in search of the poor man, only to find him lying dead under a tree, with a tear-stained handkerchief at his head. Then he remembered how it is written, " The sacrifice of GOD is a troubled spirit ; a broken and contrite heart, O GOD, Thou wilt not despise."\*

" When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Are we careful to do this ; to obey GOD'S voice, and not try to excuse ourselves for lack of service ? GOD demands it of us. We must not try to make ourselves safe without regard to others ; we have it in our power, oftener than we realize, to do good to others ; everybody has a claim on everybody else ; and that religion is not inspired by God which ignores the well-being of others and concentrates all its efforts on self. We must not seek to get rid of all hindrances to serving GOD better, and bend all our energies to a closer walk with GOD, while all the time we are ignoring our responsibility towards others.

\*See Canon Newbolt's " Speculum Sacerdotum," pages, 191-192.

We must not neglect others in our endeavour to make our own calling and election sure. **M**oses asked **G**OD to blot his name out of His Book, if by so doing Israel might be saved. **S.** Paul wished himself accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake. The religion of the Crucified is a religion of love ; and he serves **G**OD best who brings most souls to Him. The love of **G**OD is a constraining force, which influences a man's whole life, and makes him willing to risk all so as to save even some.

## VI. Endurance in Service

“ He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”—S. MATTHEW xxiv., 13.

Persecution for conscience sake has ever been the fate of those who amidst ungodly or worldly surroundings try to serve Christ. In the early Church one persecution followed another ; many fell away from the faith ; still more continued steadfast and followed the Master even to the martyr's death, rather than save themselves by any unworthy subterfuge or denial of His claims. An Apostle testifies, “ All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution ” ; another says, “ Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.” In the passage from which my text is taken, our Lord had been warning His Apostles of what discipleship involved. The reason of it all is that the world is the enemy of Christ ; an enemy which the Christian is bound by his baptismal vows to fight. The Lord foretells the iniquity which shall abound, and the sad result that all will not be able to stand firm ; some will give in : “ the love of many shall wax cold.” Oh ! how sad to think that anyone

who starts full of zeal and hopeful in the promise of a life to be spent for Christ gradually gets slack ; lets the world in on him, and that love, once so warm and fervent, by degrees gets colder and colder, till it eventually dies away ; overcome by ridicule ; quenched by taunts ; killed by threats, because the weakness of man is overpowered by the influence of things seen and temporal, and he no longer endures, as seeing Him Who is invisible.

True the reign of violence is dead ; but Satan has still got shafts in his quiver ; the power of temptation from within now takes the place of outward persecution. Those who say that final perseverance follows necessarily upon conversion—that to be once saved is to be saved for ever—leave out of sight an important factor in the case ; the fact of man's free will. GOD *wants* all to be saved, but He has permitted the devil to tempt us, so that character may be developed and strengthened by resistance of evil ; so that we may live and serve Him, not only with all the heart and mind, but also with all the will and strength.

Endurance in the face of persecution and danger is a noble virtue. We all admire the man who unflinchingly stands fast to his duty in the face of peril which besets him, and



relinquishes his life itself sooner than leave his post ; such a one we call a hero. There is as much heroism displayed when the soldier of the Cross resists all rather than do wrong and deny the Lord Who bought him ; and stakes all earthly interests rather than give in to the repeated assaults of the careless, easy-going men of the world, who laugh at principles beyond their comprehension—sneer at scruples which they can't understand, and place obstacles in the way of the little ones who believe in Christ. Very often the struggle is intensified and made more bitter by the sad fact that a man's foes are they of his own house. But still, he must stand firm at all costs, and do what pleases GOD, knowing that the Master has said with regard to such cases, that unless we hate father and mother for His sake we cannot be His disciples. GOD demands an utter and complete consecration ; there must be no slacking, no compromise, or partial surrender, for the sake of peace.

“ He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” The very form of the words shows how difficult the task is ; how many will lapse ! They even seem to indicate that those who thus endure will always be

the faithful minority. It is not easy always to serve Christ, especially when it involves the loosening of close ties, as it sometimes will do. But as well as what applies to individuals here and there, there are wider and more general causes which make it difficult and which are of universal application. Our Lord outlines a few.

He speaks of persecution which arises because of the word. This will include all forms of petty ridicule and spite ; the reproach of the Cross, in whatever way manifested. Canon Liddon has pointed out that this is inevitable, from the very nature of the case ; because persecution is friction, and if friction be continued long enough, it brings movement to a standstill. The only way to counteract this result is by a new supply of the impelling force. So that, when this is applied in a spiritual sense, we can readily see that it is possible for a man to do much for Christ, and to be rich in good works, but at the end to give in weakly where one least expects it, and perhaps on the very eve of victory, before the force of long continued, relentless persecution. And how sad are such failures ! What harm they do to the cause of Christ in the world. The grace of perseverance is comparatively rare. Oh !

let us watch carefully lest we should disappoint the Master, and because of what we consider "a hard saying" in the application of religion to life, turn back, and walk no more with Him! I think that in the early days of Church history such lapses were comparatively rare; the flame of love to Christ burnt strong and steady. Nowadays, when the form of the persecution is altered, when it becomes moral rather than physical, lapse is more common; a gradual falling back into old habits, a fitful burning of the torch, with unsteady and flickering flame, which after a few spurts goes out and leaves the soul stranded in the darkness from which it had been delivered. In such cases, truly, "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them."

Another cause which our Lord tells us makes perseverance in following Him so difficult is the presence of "false Christs and false prophets." In olden days this was literally true. Men were led away from the truth as it is in Jesus, the faith of the Gospel, by teachers who subverted it, and claimed for themselves a God-given mission which they did not pos-

sess, thus drawing away numbers from their rightful allegiance. The duty of the disciple was manifest. “ If any man say unto you, Lo ! here is Christ, or there, believe him not.” And have these false guides no counterpart amongst us to-day ? Is not our faith in danger of being undermined—unless we watch and pray—by those who belittle certain doctrines and deny others ? What is of faith as regards sin ? Is it only an amiable weakness ? Is it a necessity of our position ? Will God punish sin ? Will He not be too merciful ? Is not everlasting punishment a bogey of the theologian ? May not our Lord’s words be watered down as out of date under the present conditions of the world ? Such are some of the specious arguments employed to deceive us. But over and above the subtleties of every form of intellectual sophistry stands the solemn declaration of the Master, that His teaching is for all time. It is not to be explained away ; it does not vary with the chances and changes of life ; nor accommodate itself to an altered environment. “ Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away ! ”

Once more ; to bring the whole thing closer to ourselves. Is not our power of endurance severely tested by the lapse of time ? We

live so far away, and everything goes on as usual. There is no sign of any coming of Christ to reckon with us ; nothing to stimulate our zeal ; nothing to warn of judgment to come. The good seem unrewarded ; the bad go unpunished. Godliness, in a word, does not seem to pay. Again, something occurs which arouses us. A mission is held in our parish ; we are powerfully influenced by it ; we try to live nearer to GOD, and for a time, all goes well. We deny self ; we try in many ways to apply religion to life ; we are so happy in the thought that now at last we are living for GOD, and giving Him His proper place in our lives. We pray more ; we read our Bible more ; we feel the blessedness of the frequent Eucharist. All this may be genuine, but on the other hand, it *may* be only a wave of excitement that passes over us, and then expends itself. The seed may have fallen among the thorns of earthly pleasure on the wayside of life, or on the stony ground of the shallow heart only to be scorched and withered up by the fire of temptation. Time alone can test it. But even with the best of us, the element of excitement is strong. After a time this passes away, and we know that it is going ; we feel our love growing colder ; we no longer value

our Communion as we did, and are conscious that we now allow little things to keep us away which before we should have never allowed to interfere with it. Every Sunday morning is too often—once a fortnight now amply satisfies us ; we get so little good. There is no surer sign of spiritual declension than slacking off in this matter, and it will inevitably lead to slackness in other directions ; till the world steals in on us once more, inch by inch ; and unless our wandering steps are arrested, the last state is worse than the first. The knowledge within us that we are beginning to lose ground brings depression. This is permitted by GOD ; in itself, if rightly used, it will prove a blessing in disguise, for it will make our service more unselfish, being freed from the trammels of any artificial impulse. But under this trial, when worldly friends are exulting because common-sense has once more asserted itself, and we once more take a lively interest in the pursuits that used to delight us, and which we found satisfying before this experience befel us—all may be lost. " He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved."

Do not, if you would avoid such a lapse, allow yourself to trifle with conscience in little

matters. If you are doing so, return to God. Dont get into the way of curtailing prayer ; dont get into the way of spending an undue amount of money on self in proportion to what you devote to God's service ; dont be reckless in your intercourse with others, nor spend too much time on amusement, to the neglect of duty—or make it an end in itself. All this dulls and blunts the edge of conscience.

Let me, in conclusion, offer one or two suggestions as to what is likely to secure perseverance and endurance to the end.

Let us be more earnest in Communion and prayer, realizing our constant dependence on God to keep us from falling, and let us cultivate more in daily life the sense of His constant presence with us, even in the midst of earth's necessary cares and earth's absorbing vanities. So we shall be in a fair way to deepen our religious convictions ; to strengthen within ourselves a more devotional temperament, and by enduring in God's fear and love from day to day, we shall, by His infinite mercy, endure "unto the end." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of Life !"



I have now brought to a close the course of meditations which I proposed on the " Life of Service." You have followed its various steps with me, as we thought of the inspiration of all true service ; the obstacles we meet with ; the strength which GOD gives to overcome those obstacles ; the dignity and majesty of that service which is perfect freedom ; the privilege and duty of leading others to serve ; and the hard task of endurance to the end. Think of these things, especially during the solemn week which is before us\* ; and bring your life's service at the foot of the Cross to be hallowed and sanctified by the merits of Christ's precious blood. Bring your resolve to Him, " As for me, I will serve the Lord." Thus with life afresh dedicated to Him, you will rise daily from the death of sin to the Eternal Easter life ; the resurrection life of GOD's saints, and you and I who here try to serve Him in the darkness of earth's shadowland shall hereafter serve Him in His courts above, when this world's night of heaviness shall be exchanged for Heaven's bright day of perfect joy !

\*This Address was given originally in Passion Week.



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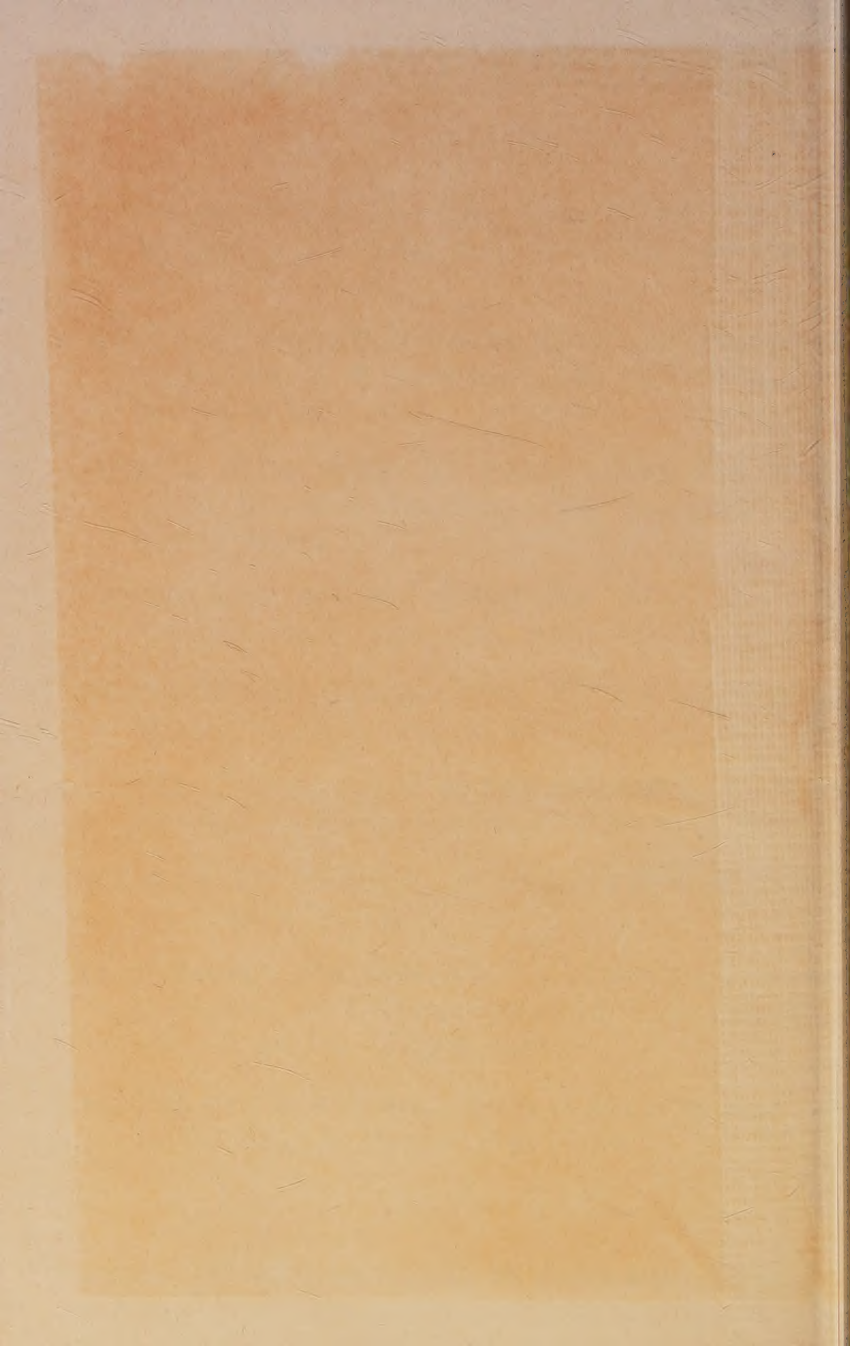
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